
The MCA Advisory

The Newsletter of Medal Collectors of America

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medalcollectors.org

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From the Editor

This is our first issue printed on the Magcloud website. We believe that the color and print quality are acceptable, especially given economics that are much superior to those offered by a commercial print shop. The challenge of this methodology falls on Thelma, my longtime assistant, and ye editor. Our copy in Word must be translated into a pdf file and then uplifted to the Magcloud website. Rules governing the site layout procedure result in illogical pagination. Any changes to rationalize Magcloud but be initiated back in Word, than put into pdf and, finally, lifted back to the site. Hopefully this becomes easier with experience.

We recently purchased *French Medallics Art* by Nicolas Maier. This splendid book surveys the development of the medal in France from 1870 to 1940. It is during this epoch that medallic art evolves from the strict classical rules of L'Academie des Belles Lettres into more fluid forms and formats. The work of 73 artists is surveyed, with excellent photographs throughout.

Speaking of books, we would also recommend Robert Turfboer's English translation of *van Loon*. This segment of the Dutch masterpiece includes a complete discussion of the classical rules for medal design as well as the logic behind them. We guarantee that fundamental knowledge of the medallic art will enhance your enjoyment of what you collect

Club Meeting at the New York International

Held from January 1st through the 10th, NYIC featured the usual plethora of auctions. The most notable feature of these was a surge in the prices of classical coinage. Choice pieces fetched multiples of the auctioneer's estimates.

The A.N.S. Gala, though a bit pricey at \$500 per ticket, was the usual riot of good food, good drink and good dancing. The collections of the Society are unrivaled, so that supporting the stewardship of these treasures is giving support to the very core of our hobby. Thus, doing well by the A.N.S. AND having fun is truly bang for the buck.

On the Bourse floor, Alan Davisson, a longtime specialist in English coinage and tokens, has retired from the lists. A promising newcomer, who is doing auctions as well as bourse coverage, is International Coin Exchange Ltd. of Dublin, Ireland. Members will find some choice items in their February sale.

Attendance at our MCA meeting was relatively sparse. We welcomed Gerry Muhl, who drove all the way from Rochester, picking up a friend in Syracuse on the way East. Having corresponded with Gerry for some years now, it was nice to meet this talented numismatist in person. We must chalk low attendance up to the weather, because the Club's vital signs are otherwise upbeat; the Secretary's report gave membership at 175 and rising; the Treasurer's report found us with \$7500 in the bank; and the Webmaster's report described an ever burgeoning amount of material on our website. Ye editor gave a presentation on the Admiral Vernon medals followed by a warm Q&A. Finally, David Menchell, who chaired the meeting in John Sallay's absence, conducted an auction of seven generously donated items. Bidding was not frantic (unfortunately for the Club Exchequer), but some \$700 was raised, with Anne Bentley's day at the Massachusetts Historical Society fetching \$200 - an incredible bargain.

Malcolm Storer's Misattribution Corrected (by Anne Bentley)

We enjoy displaying our collections here at the Massachusetts Historical Society, not least because we often learn as much from our visitors as they do from us. A case in point comes from our recent exhibition, "Precious Metals: From Au to Zn." When the first photographs from our display went online, I heard from Andrew W. Harkness,

collector and author, with Timothy Corlo, of *Agricultural and Mechanical Society Award Medals of the United States* (available through www.lulu.com). Andy contacted me to say that he thought the medal that Malcolm Storer had listed as no.1309 under the Massachusetts Charitable Mechanic Association, was more likely the 1838 award medal of the *Maine Charitable Mechanic Association*. Once the show opened, Andy came down specifically to check it out and urge me to see if I could find anything to corroborate his theory.



M.C.M.A. Fair 1838. Silver award medal to The New England Painted Floor Cloth Co. Silver, 35 x 38 mm, 29.5 grams. Ex Wm. S. Appleton, 1905.

I'm delighted to say that I've just been able to do so. In our collections we have a pamphlet that puts to rest any questions about the issuer of the M.C.M.A. shield award medal: titled *First Exhibition and Fair of the Maine Charitable Mechanic Association: held at the City Hall, in the city of Portland, from Sept. 24 to Oct. 6, 1838*, the publication was

printed in Portland by Charles Day & Co. for the Association in 1838.

Under the heading "Carpeting, Cotton and Printed Goods," this very medal is listed on page 30:

"Specimens of Oil Carpeting, from the New England Company, Roxbury, Mass. These are a beautiful article, both for richness and durability--the brown and white ground particularly are elegant, and deserve great credit--they are the only specimens of these kind of goods exhibited on this occasion.

A SILVER MEDAL."

Although the Committee on Medals "to procure a device for Medals, with inscription--and a design for a diploma" is listed in full (it consisted of J.R. Thompson, chairman, Abner Lowell, and William Capen), the person responsible for the medal is not mentioned anywhere in the eighty-two page pamphlet. I've contacted Arthur Gaffar of the Maine Charitable Mechanic Association to see if he can help determine the medal maker, so stay tuned. Meanwhile, Art keeps a census of all known Maine C.M.A. medals, so if you know of any, you might want to contact him to see if he has them listed [artgaff@gmail.com].

Report of a New British Counterfeit

(by Scott Miller)

It had to happen. I knew it was only a matter of time, but it had to happen. Close on the heels of reports of counterfeit coins coming out of China, the latest development is counterfeit Royal Mint envelopes for small size coronation and jubilee medals, 1897 to 1937.

For those readers who may not be familiar with the series of English coronation medals that date back more than 400 years, small medals were distributed by the monarch during the coronation as princely largess. Originally given in the form of money, the distribution was replaced by medals beginning with the coronation of James I in 1603. On the occasion of the Golden Jubilee of Queen

Victoria in 1887, military medals were distributed to those in attendance at the celebration, and a large commemorative medal was offered for sale to the public. This format has been followed ever since, though official commemorative medals were not offered for sale in 1953 for the coronation of the current Queen, Elizabeth II.

Between 1897 and 1937 coronation and jubilee medals were issued in two sizes. During these years, the larger medals were sold with leather, presentation cases, as were small gold issues. Large silver and bronze medals for 1902 and 1911 were also accompanied by paper envelopes; it is possible that other years had large envelopes as well, though I have not seen any.

As for the smaller medals, while some are occasionally seen in presentation cases, the small silver 1897 medals generally came in paper envelopes, as did the small silver 1902 and 1911 coronation medals; the small silver 1935 and silver and bronze 1937 medals were issued in card boxes.

Recently, I noticed for sale on an internet auction a number of envelopes for the small medals, dated 1897, 1902, 1911, 1935 and 1937. While I had seen a few offered previously with medals, and recognized them as counterfeit, their re-appearance has prompted me to mention them. While at first glance the 1902 and 1911 envelopes appeared convincing, their association with other, clearly counterfeit envelopes condemns them as well. The most surprising thing about these latest counterfeits is that the envelopes add very little value to the medals, which are themselves quite common and inexpensive.

Each of the counterfeit envelopes are white with black printing and measure 37 x 37mm. According to the vendor the envelopes are original with old paper and printing. The first and most glaring problem with these envelopes is that the basic information on two are wrong. Although the

envelopes indicate these are for coronation medals, there was no coronation in either 1897 or 1935. These years actually relate to the diamond jubilee of Queen Victoria and the Silver Jubilee of King George V. Below are diagnostics of legitimate and counterfeit envelopes.



1897

Counterfeit: 37x37mm white paper envelopes marked CORONATION MEDAL / 1897 / SILVER / Royal Mint. While the format is similar to other years, there was no coronation in 1897. In addition, as the 1897 medal was smaller than the medals issued for subsequent occasions, the envelope was also smaller, measuring 34mm.



Plate from 1897 Victoria Diamond Jubilee original: small silver medals are occasionally seen in leather presentation cases, though generally, as with most small coronation and jubilee medals,

have long been separated from their original packages. Most medals were issued in small white envelopes measuring 34mm. and bear the printed notation Royal Mint. (Photo courtesy Simmons Gallery Ltd, London, England - www.simmonsgallery.co.uk.)

1902 Edward VII Coronation Original: I have seen envelopes for both large and small size medals; the small envelopes measure approximately 37mm. and bear the inscription CORONATION MEDAL / 1902. / SILVER / Royal Mint. (Photo courtesy Simmons Gallery Ltd, London, England)



Counterfeit: 37x37mm white paper envelopes marked CORONATION MEDAL / 1902 / SILVER / Royal Mint. These envelopes are close to the originals in appearance, and assuming they were printed on a letterpress, could be deceiving.



1911 George V Coronation Original: I have seen envelopes for both large and small size medals. For the large size envelopes from both 1902 and 1911, the indentations generally present indicate the presentation cases with medals inside were placed in the envelopes for shipping. The small envelopes are approximately 37mm and are marked CORONATION MEDAL / 1911. / SILVER / Royal Mint. (Photo courtesy Simmons Gallery Ltd, London, England)



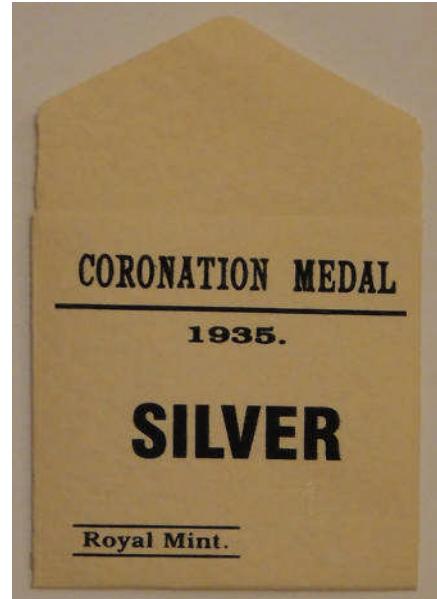
Counterfeit: 37x37mm white paper envelopes marked CORONATION MEDAL / 1911 / SILVER / Royal Mint. These envelopes are close to the

originals in appearance, and assuming they were printed on a letterpress, could be deceiving.

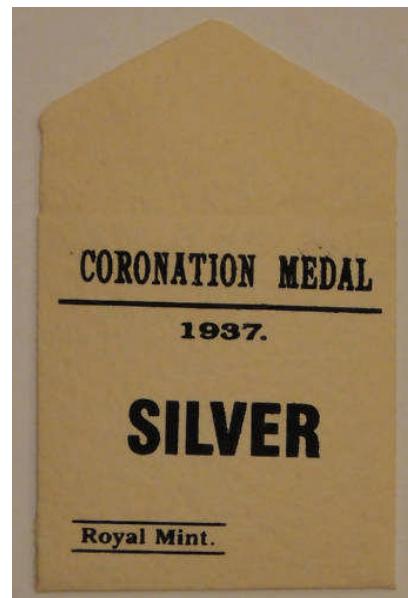


1935 George V Silver Jubilee Original: small silver medals were issued in red card boxes; 4400 small silver medals with a matte finish for distribution in Australia were issued with small, leather presentation cases, similar to those for the large, silver medals; 400 small bronze medals were struck with a matte finish and placed in cardboard boxes.

Counterfeit: 37x37mm white paper envelopes marked CORONATION MEDAL / 1935 / SILVER / Royal Mint. While the format is similar to other years, these medals were not issued in paper envelopes and there was no coronation in 1935.



1937 George VI Coronation Original: small silver and bronze medals were issued in red card boxes.



Counterfeit: 37x37mm white paper envelopes marked CORONATION MEDAL / 1937 / SILVER / Royal Mint. While the format is similar to the 1902 and 1911 envelopes, these medals were not issued in paper envelopes.

Henry Ford Museum

We have encouraged readers to report on museum holdings. This report is based on a 1966 Exhibition at the Midwest Antiques forum. Unfortunately the Henry Ford Museum is effectively unapproachable today, such that we could not verify that the collection still exists if it has been expanded, or what. Too many repositories have been squeezed by financial issues. It is a pity that choice items such as we will list below cannot be viewed ad studied.

In the 1966 Exhibition, the Henry Ford Museum displayed these items among others:

- 1) Capture of Treasure at Matanzas (Betts 24)
- 2) John Law Medals, Betts 126 and 128.
- 3) Annapolis Tuesday Club medal, Betts 383, in copper. This item is particularly important, with the only other example in this metal having been sold from the John J. Ford collection. If the die state of the piece could be determined, it might show whether the piece is a pattern or an emblem of membership, as are the examples in silver.
- 4) Anson's Voyage, Betts 382 in silver.
- 5) 1757 Quaker Indian Peace medal, Betts 401. The rare original in silver.
- 6) Attack on Louisbourg, Betts 410. This is Thomas Pingo's lovely commemoration of the event. Silver.
- 7) Montreal Token, Betts 429, in silver.
- 8) Charlestown Social Club, Betts 508, in bronze.
- 9) Captain Cook medal, Betts 555, in white metal.
- 10) Horatio Gates medal, Betts 557, metal unknown.
- 11) Daniel Morgan medal, Betts 593, in bronze. Less than a dozen examples known.
- 12) Libertas Americana, Betts 615, in silver.

- 13) Washington C.C.A.U.S., Baker 57, in silver.

The rarest of the four Samson medals.

- 14) South Carolina's medal to the Palmetto Regiment in silver.

- 15) Season's medal, pastoral scene, in silver.

- 16) James Monroe Indian peace medal, medium size, in silver.

- 17) James Fillmore Indian peace medal, large size, in silver.

The presence of many later medals on down to a John F. Kennedy inaugural medal (1961) demonstrates that the Museum remained an active acquisitor until that date. The breadth of the material listed above hints that there may be many more rarities contained in the collection. It is a great pity that the Henry Ford Museum should have effectively removed these historical treasures from public view. If staffing is not available, it would be better to pass the medal collection along to an institution that could provide the stewardship the medals deserve.

Letters to the Editor

Hello John and many thanks for offering to include details of the book. Herewith are a few facts and stats:

At 7.5 inches (190 mm.) in width, by 10 inches (250 mm.) in length, the book follows the same format as the first edition, as do the layout of the catalogue entries themselves and the running headers. Additional standard features are explanatory notes and an introduction.

A new feature in the book is a chapter dealing with production numbers, which lists over one hundred medals. Historical and biographical notes to many medals have been expanded in the new edition and the entries themselves have been beefed up with references to many of the works published in the intervening 23 years since the first many publications that.

Another significant feature of the new editions are the illustrations, which in the first edition comprised 625 half-tone black and white images arranged on 53 plates. The new edition has more than 2000 coloured images distributed over 240 plates.

In instances where a medal comes in both struck and cast form, efforts have been made to illustrate both types side by side. Similarly, images are provided of many medals occurring both as sixteenth- and seventeenth-century originals and eighteenth-century copies. The benefits that such comparisons allow are invaluable. or thought to be otherwise present on other similarit is thought to be the obviousrisons provide are obvious but rarely, if at all, can they be otherwise made have they otherwise been provided

Christopher Eimer

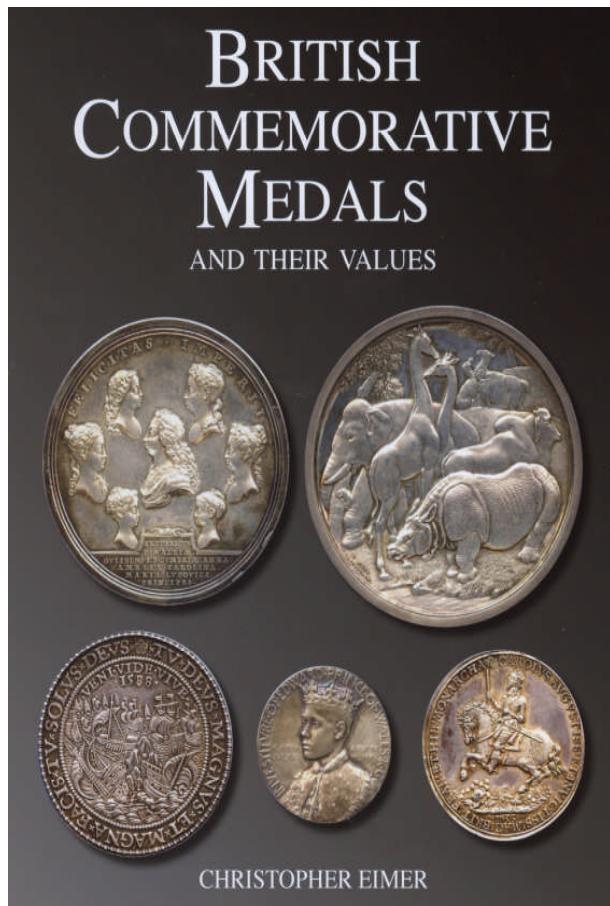


Plate from Eimer's book.

Dear Anne:

I am still, four months later, dealing with a serious case of medal envy over the breathtaking exhibition you mounted during the ANA convention in Boston. The only consolation I can muster is that the MHS has been collecting a lot longer than your humble correspondent--perhaps when I have been at the game for 219 years, I'll have a splendid collection, too!

I am writing to you as the arbiter on all things that are both numismatic and John Quincy Adams in nature. I recently, in the course of research on another topic, came across a traveler's memoir documenting the gift of two medals to JQA while he was President, and I am intrigued as to whether said medals were gifted to the MHS, and if so, whether they are still part of the collection.

His Highness, Bernhard, Duke of Saxe-Weimar Eisenach, visited the U.S. in 1825-1826, and wrote a two-volume book about his travels, entitled, straightforwardly enough, *Travels Through North America, During the Years 1825 and 1826*. In volume 1, on p. 158, he describes meeting President Adams in Philadelphia on October 23,

1825, when JQA was returning from a visit to his father in Massachusetts. Bernhard gave two medals to the President. His description is fairly terse in the text, but I have filled in with some research. The two medals were the gift of a citizen of Ghent, Egide-Norbert-Cornelissen (1769-1849), and entrusted to Bernhard for delivery to JQA. Both medals were "sunk" as Bernhard puts it, by the medalist Joseph Pierre Braemt (1796-1864). One medal was silver, and commemorated the Botanic Society of Ghent. The other was bronze, and struck in 1823 to celebrate the "jubilee," as Bernhard has it, of printing.

I assume that JQA made Cornelissen's acquaintance when he was one of the American negotiators in Ghent seeking to end the War of 1812. I further assume that JQA would have regarded this gift as personal rather than diplomatic in nature, so that the medals would go into his personal collection rather than to the Patent Office--but this latter assumption is more questionable than the former. I have checked the two Stack's sales of MHS Adams collection materials, from March and September of 1971, and found nothing like either of these medals described in them. Hence my questions--were these two ever part of the MHS collection? If so, are they still part of the cabinet?

Many thanks in advance, Anne, for any help you are able to provide on this question. And a very happy holiday season to you, as well!

Best regards,

Joel Orosz

Thanks for the kind words, Joel--we really are fortunate that so much numismatic material stayed in the collection.

What a fun JQA puzzle...neither medal sounds familiar, but I'll check the old cards and other sales catalogs that include

our stuff (they could have been separated from the Adams collection and deaccessioned w/out provenance). I'll also check in with Adams family members and my buddies at Old House (NPS, Quincy) to see if they recognize these. Do you have a deadline? We're in the process of massive strategic plan reorganization which includes major job change and office move for me...and since I'm one-handed for the next month or so (recent hand surgery), everything is sloooow as molasses at my end.

I'm ordering *The Secret History* and looking forward to learning a great deal from it, once I'm able to turn pages again!

Season's Greetings to you as well, Joel--and all best wishes in 2011

Anne E. Bentley
Curator of Art/acting loans registrar
Massachusetts Historical Society

[Good afternoon, Joel - Sounds like another piquant project. Thanks for copying me. I don't always read The E-Sylum (and I wouldn't attempt to retrieve it from some database)- where does one buy The Secret History ? Also, if you send me a blurb, I will re-weave it into a piece for the MCA Advisory.—Ed.]

Dear John:

This will be a fun project, particularly if Anne can run one or both of the medals to ground in the MHS collection. Even if they have departed, finding where they have gone will still add some fascination to the story.

The Secret History will emerge from China at some point in mid-January. I shall send you an inscribed copy when it does. Your offer to translate a blurb into a notice for the *MCA Advisory* is gratefully accepted--blurb attached.

I was unaware of Dan's ailment. Is it an inner ear problem? Your proposed remedy strikes me as at least as efficacious, and a darned sight cheaper, than any prescription that could be garnered from the pharmacopoeia! I'll drop Dan a note--in English--to see if there is anything I can do to be helpful. Perhaps I could offer to ease his mind by safeguarding his Woodwards and Chapmans....

I hope that you and Regina have a glorious holiday surrounded by your extended brood. Florence and I have our first absence this year; our eldest daughter is spending the Christmas holidays with her boyfriend's family in, of all places, Alaska. It must be love!

Warm regards,

Joel Orsoz

Vernon Section

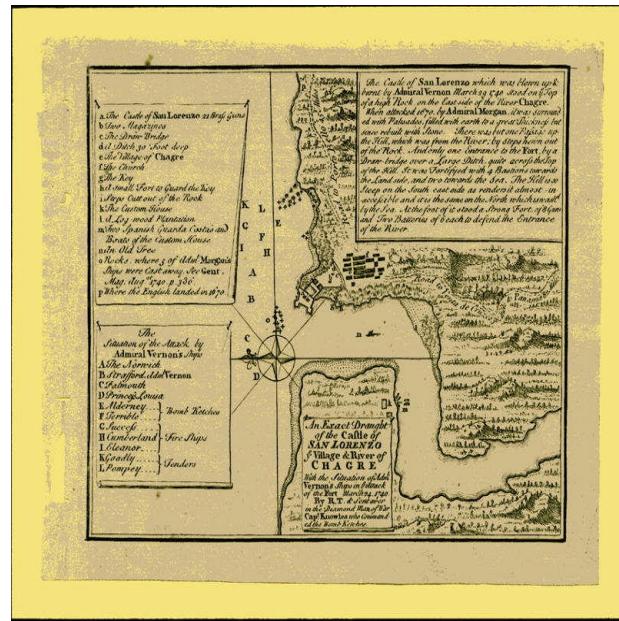
I am attaching a photo of a map that I recently purchased of The Castle of San Lorenzo, Chagre. The image size is about 6 1/2" across x 5 1/4" high plus a small border around. There is a lot of information printed on the map. In the lower left is a listing A thru L that lists the Situation of The Attack by Admiral Vernon's ships. Each is named and shown where it was positioned during the attack. In the upper left is a listing small a thru p, and I note n. - An Old Tree. On the map the n is shown in the middle of the river. In your reference under FCv 1-A, you indicate that Milford Haven remarked that the tree on the medal is probably an old tree used as a navigation mark, on an island at the mouth of the Chagres River. The person who sold me the map indicated it was from a 1740 issue of *Gentleman's Magazine*. Back in 1986 I purchased another map of Port of Chagres, Showing Fortifications. That is a slightly larger map 10" x 7 1/4" - at least according to my ledger book. However, I have not seen it in many years - is deep inside one of the safe deposit boxes. Eventually, it will surface, and I will put it in the box with the medals.

Best to you for the holiday season.

Warren Lloyd Plumer

[Warren Lloyd sent us this map of Fort Chagre, which he believes comes from a

1740 issue of the Gentleman's Magazine. It confirms the large tree on a small island at the mouth of the River, as well as a lot of tactical information. Neat find, Mr. Lloyd!]



Surface Technology (by John W. Adams)

The early 18th century witnessed the dawn of the Industrial Revolution. Interest in metal working technology sparked an evolution in manufacturing. Interest in metal composition, as perhaps epitomized by alchemy, fostered new products in many sectors, not the least being coinage.

Christopher Pinchbeck (1670-1732) pioneered the development of an alloy that was golden in color and ductile to shape. So called “pinchbeck” metal was used to make sword hilts, cane heads, watch chains and a panoply of products for the carriage trade. The formula for “pinchbeck” was a closely guarded family secret, but is thought to have been roughly 85% copper and 15% metallic zinc. (Long known in Asia, refined zinc was an expense novelty in England in the 1730’s and 1740’s).

One of the puzzles of the Admiral Vernon series is that many well-preserved examples retain the golden glow that one associates with “pinchbeck,” yet have a specific gravity consistent with a composition of only 60% copper and 40% zinc (presumably calamine or cheaper zinc). To have a golden glow yet be so far from the classic

85%/15% “pinchbeck” composition raises the possibility of a surface treatment subsequent to the forming process.

In the medal depicted below the golden glow is no longer present on the high points of the design, but it is also missing

from some of the lower, more protected areas, such as the fields on the obverse and the upper harbor on the reverse. Thus, it seems clear that the glow can be removed both by friction and the elapsation of time.

PB_V 52-AAA

Obverse



PB_V52-AAA Obverse

Reverse



PB_V52-AAA Reverse

The medal in question was cast and presumably, the pinchbeck layer was applied when the piece was broken out of the mold. With struck pieces, it would have been possible, if not likely, that the “pinchbeck” was applied to the raw flan. Thus, even if one correctly infers from PB_V 52-AAA that the surfacing process lacked permanence; one cannot conclude that this would also have been true for struck pieces, which are far more common.

The best resolution of the issue would be to subject a small sample of Vernon medals in pinchbeck to x-ray fluorescence or some other sensitive device for analyzing surfaces. Do any of our members have access to such equipment?